# CURVE

LIVING TRUE





# LOVE DOESN'T FOLLOW A RECIPE.

ABSOLUT.

#ABSOLUTPLANET

# Editorial



Editor in Chief

Merryn Johns

# Strike Oil, with its colorful designs, helps build a platform for LGBTQ individuals

ne of the most direct ways to be authentic is to demand visibility, and one of the most immediate ways to achieve that is through personal style. Fashion is an increasingly important form of expression for gueer women. Recently, Nats Getty, a high-profile artist and LGBTQ rights activist-and the out-and-proud heir to the Getty fortunelaunched her own label, Strike Oil. When I met Nats in New York she told me the motto of the label was Rise Early, Work Hard, Strike Oil. It's a saying from the man who built the Getty empire, but Nats has repurposed it as a mantra for what she refers to as "the differents"—those of us who never truly fit in. Resourcefulness is, no doubt, a road to reward, but for Nats, and for so many of us, our sense of personal advancement is tied to the broader LGBTQ community. Strike Oil, with its colorful, street-inspired designs, channels Nat's rebelliousness to help build a platform for LGBTQ individuals and to send a message to us to wear our identities proudly. So this spring, I hope you go out there and "strike oil" in whatever aspect of your life needs it the most...

merryn@curvemag.com Mennyn



LIVING TRUE

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# Content



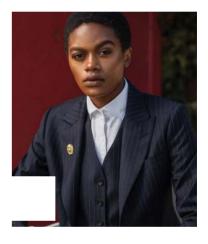
# Women We Love: Daya

The Grammy-nominated, out musical prodigy is bringing it for the girls and headling The Dinah.



# **Food: Crista Luedtke**

An out Sonoma chef has transformed a sleepy town on the edge of the redwoods into a culinary mecca.



# **Style: Emily Meyer**

Smart and stylish suits for Spring by an out lesbian designer from the San Francisco Bay Area.



# **Cover: Nats Getty**

The out 'rainbow rebel' has launched her lifestyle label Strike Oil, combining art with activism.



# **History: Gay Liberation**

Beth Suskin and Leslie Cohen modeled for a monument that became part of the first LGBT landmark in America.



# **Event: WorldPride 2019**

The Big Apple hosts the world's biggest LGBT party this June and we've booked a suite at the AC Hotel Times Square to celebrate.

# Contributors



Anita Dolce Vita Style



Dave Steinfeld Music



Leslie Cohen History

# Anita Dolce Vita

Anita Dolce Vita is a queer femme, queer fashion and travel writer whose work has been featured in HBO, Vanity Fair, Teen Vogue, at the Brooklyn Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, the International Center of Photography, South by Southwest, and more. Anita is also the owner of dapperQ, a digital queer style magazine and fashion show production company. This issue, Anita previews Spring suits.

# Dave Steinfeld

Dave Steinfeld grew up in Connecticut and is now based in New York City. He has been a professional journalist since 1999 and has arguably written about queer women in music more than any male journalist in America. Dave's first piece for Curve was on The Cliks, and since then he has written about Patti Smith, Neneh Cherry, Ani DiFranco, Ann Wilson and the Indigo Girls. For this issue, he spoke with Amanda Palmer who called him "an honorary lesbian."

# Leslie Cohen

In 1979 Leslie Cohen was asked by the famous artist George Segal to model for "Gay Liberation," the life-size sculpture of two same-sex couples that commemorates the Stonewall Rebellion in New York City. She agreed with one recommendation: that she be represented next to her then partner and now wife Beth Suskin. "If you want to capture something special," she said, "you should capture me and Bethie. I'm mad for this woman." Leslie shares her story in what is the 50th anniversary of Stonewall.





are Gillen

The Grammy Award–winning pop sensation is headlining The Dinah.

It's been a meteoric rise for Daya since her 2016 double-platinum single "Hide Away," a Grammy Award, a gold-certified album, a national tour, and a second album on its way. Lucky for us that the 21-year-old out musical prodigy is headlining the world's biggest party for queer women—The Dinah.

# On writing songs with an empowering message for women

Female empowerment is something I've always felt important to touch on with my art, especially after entering this industry and experiencing its injustice in the flesh. I think "Hide Away" and "Sit Still Look Pretty" were great songs, definitive of me in the period of time they were written in, but I'd like to think I'm still growing and expanding on those ideas. I'd still like to see more women as CEOs of companies, more women in STEM, and better pay for women across the board. I'd also like to empower all types of women—not just the ones working for themselves, but also the ones staying home, raising a family, embracing their bodies, wearing makeup, not wearing makeup, etc. I just want girls to feel empowered to do things for themselves—whatever that means—and not because they feel the need to impress a guy or fit into a certain mold.

# On being invited to the White House by Barack Obama

I'm honored to have had the chance to meet a president whose political and social ideologies line up so closely with mine. Michelle Obama is also one of my idols, and I've been lucky to meet her and work with her several times. As for the current administration, I don't think it solely takes a difference in politics to disagree. I think being a human being with empathy is enough. He has chosen to speak and think solely from the straight, white, wealthy male perspective, because it's clear that's all he is privileged enough to know. I don't think there would ever be a world where he would respect my existence as a queer girl, so I'm not entirely sure how to respect his. But, I do think it's a very important time for awareness and activism, and I think we've made a lot of exciting strides in the past few years. I believe it's on us as artists to take the division he's

created and turn it into unity through our music and art, while also speaking for the voices of the minorities who do not have a platform of their own to be heard on. I hope to continue to grow and educate and be educated in that way and use my voice to heal and continue fighting for what's right.

# On coming out as bisexual last year

I've always been fairly ambiguous and explorative with my sexuality, but it wasn't until this past year that I got to cement those feelings into a relationship. I had a hard time dating and seeing people while I was on tour for the first few years of my career, with the distance and everything, so it wasn't until I settled in L.A. that I really got the chance to explore my sexuality. I met my girlfriend at my label and we kept in touch for a few months, then randomly met up one night and basically have spent all 10 months since then side by side. When I told my family about it, I think they were more surprised that I was dating anyone rather than that she's a girl. I did face obstacles with a few people in my life, but the culture in L.A. and my friends out here really helped me stay confident in my sexuality. I'm so grateful to be surrounded by such amazing, open minds and a community so accepting and universally loving.

# On what she's expecting from The Dinah

I actually first heard of Dinah Shore from my band last year—I think my guitarist's girlfriend was there at the time when we were on tour. Once I realized it's just a massive gay-girl party I freaked out. It feels so common for gay guys to have these types of outlets, but is much rarer for girls, so for this to happen, and in Palm Springs in the middle of festival season, is a dream. I'm excited to be there and celebrate with my LGBTQ sisters and get fucking wild. I wanna make this show a unique experience, especially to give back to the community that's helped so much in guiding me through my sexuality over the past year. Gonna be a really exciting moment—get your tix now, ladies!

thedinah.com

# Reclaiming Our Pleasure

Women are disrupting the adult market, one toy at a time. Ti Chang

s a designer of award-winning sex toys for Crave, a female-led, San Francisco-based brand, I'm excited to be part of the enormous cultural shift in the way we talk about our sexual health and pleasure. We've seen tremendous mainstream demand for and acceptance of the products we and other modern brands create to enhance our sexual experiences and open up the conversation about what we desire. But there are also some real "WTF" moments where we need to see real change.

# The Good:

- · Seedy "adult" bookstores and porn shops are either closing down or upgrading. Shelves of poorly made novelties in ugly "sexy" packaging are losing ground to chic modern products that embrace contemporary design and technology. Increasingly, high-end and mainstream retailers like Bergdorf Goodman and Urban Outfitters proudly display Crave products right next to their other beautiful accessories.
- · This previously stigmatized space is now filled with new entrepreneurs, designers, and engineers who didn't start out in the adult industry, but have backgrounds in Fortune 500 companies. And guess what? The market is very interested.
- · We love seeing our products come out of the closet-or bedside drawer. From celebrities like Janet Jackson accepting a Global Icon award at the MTV Awards, to everyday folks going around town, we see women wearing our Vesper vibrator necklace proudly, as a statement both of fashion and of feminism.



Ti Chang



• When we toured the U.S. last year in our Crave Pleasure Factory, a converted Airstream trailer where we hosted Build-A-Vibe workshops, we saw firsthand how losing the stigma around sex toys can help people own their desire and pleasure, spark conversations with their partners and friends, and make sexual well-being an accepted part of their health and happiness.

# The Huh:

• With this influx of new companies and products, you'll hear a fair share of sensational claims to be "the first product that..." and "the only vibrator with..." Many products will be quick to implement newer Internet of Things technologies and then under-deliver on the experience. Imagine having your partner pointing a remote control directly at your crotch to make sure the signal is received! Makes you feel real sexy, right?

The Really Frustrating WTF Moments:

- You'd think that the tech community—normally a proud early adopter on all things—would be eager to embrace innovative products like ours, right? You'd be surprised. The noted Consumer Electronics Show (CES) recently revoked an Innovation Award from the woman-run sex toy startup Lora DiCarlo, one of a number of companies that is driving innovation in this space, on the grounds that the product was "immoral, obscene, indecent, profane"—which was, unfortunately, not a surprise to us, because Crave had been denied entry to CES a few years earlier on the same grounds
- Companies like ours can't advertise or promote posts on Facebook, regardless of the content. And we see a clear double standard here: Products that support male sexual well-being are generally allowed, while products that support women's pleasure are not. Viagra and other erectile dysfunction products? No problem. Vibrators? No way.

Even without a double standard, why is sexual health and pleasure still considered offensive in the 21st century marketplace of ideas? We don't see this in the larger community, where our products have been met with acceptance and delight. People are eager to have healthier and more open-minded conversations about sexuality, and they're frustrated that they can't find products that support these conversations in the places—like CES and Facebook—where they'd expect to find them.

For 2019, my hope is that we can help move the conversation forward both in the tech world and in everyday interactions, paving the way to create and market new technologies that enhance people's lives with sexual pleasure, well-being, and happiness.



# Product Spotlight: Crave Pocket Vibe

Crave's most intense and powerful vibe yet, the Pocket Vibe is elegant, compact, USB rechargeable, and comes with three interchangeable silicon tips for different sensations. With five vibration settings, waterproof and whisper quiet, it's the perfect travel companion...or bedside friend. And it makes a great gift, too. lovecrave.com

# Light Up Your Life

A married couple designs affordable luxury candles for every season.



Alaina and Jocelyn

ocelyn Drew, 33, and Alaina Young Drew, 32, discovered they had a candle-hoarding problem after they married in New Hampshire and moved in together in New York City. Their luxury candles were too expensive to burn so they invented Bijou, scented candles affordable enough to use every day. Jocelyn is the nose behind complex, seductive scents; Alaina designs the product, packaging, and branding.

"We spent a year and a half developing the fragrances for the Starlet Collection," says Jocelyn. "We had begun referring to them as 'her' and 'she,' like, 'OMG, she smells like a cozy day in bed!' and they really started to have these personalities for us. We've always been very inspired by women in pop culture, and aesthetically our candles have a very Old Hollywood glamour to them, so it was a no-brainer to name them after classic actresses."

"As queer women we often found ourselves looking to these iconic characters for comfort and strength," says Alaina.

The latest line is based on very different inspiration. The Candle Coven Trio borrows its aesthetic from the 1990s—earthy, herbal scents in

gothic-inspired black holders. "Naming the candles took some debating, but ultimately came very naturally. Nineties witches in pop culture (e.g. Willow!) really influenced us as teens, and continue to now, so every time we light a Coven Candle, we feel really connected to our roots," says Jocelyn.

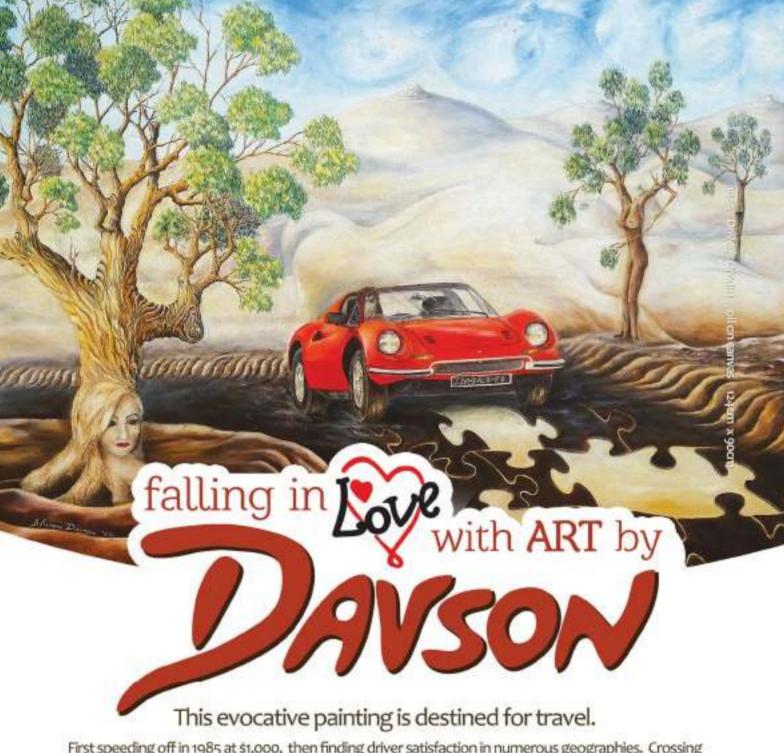
But if your tastes run a little lighter, try the Flower Power Candle Set—the ultimate spring-time bundle of three floral scents. From bright peonies to luscious jasmine with hints of vanilla and berries, these candles, when burned together, transport you to the garden party of your dreams.

And it's a clean burn: Every part of a handpoured, soy wax Bijou candle is meticulously sourced to give you the best that \$29 can buy.

# bijoucandles.com







First speeding off in 1985 at \$1,000, then finding driver satisfaction in numerous geographies. Crossing over into six figures in 2010, its diamond cutting jeweller then accelerated the pace to own a real 'red Ferrari'. Taking up residence with a Chinese collector of fine and rare things, Drivers Dream cruised toward change; and it drove very comfortably onto a prestigious rural retreat.

Seeking new adventure

Drivers Dream is available at \$385,000 AUD.

Please contact the artist who is the agent in the driver's seat.

Sharon Davson +61 416 026 426

sharon@davsonart.com davsonarts.com



# Restaurants and Redwoods

Crista Luedtke is the visionary behind a food empire in an idyllic Sonoma town.

Merryn Johns



rista Luedtke gets things done. The energetic chef-owner at Guerneville's boon eat + drink is also the proprietor of El Barrio, a Mexican cocktail lounge next door on Main Street, and the proprietor of boon hotel + spa, a much-loved, low-key LGBTQ resort nestled on the edge of an ancient redwood grove. She also owns the "lumberjack chic" Big Bottom Market, a rustic general store and cafe selling locally sourced provisions and wine. And you might have seen her as Triple Grand Champion and judge on the Food Network's *Guy's Grocery Games*.

Luedtke is not a trained chef, but she comes from a family of cooks and restaurant owners. Born in Wisconsin and raised in Arizona, Luedtke settled in San Francisco after identifying as gay—that is, until she left the Bay Area's corporate world to pursue her dream of running her own consortium of hospitable establishments in Guerneville, a lumber town on Sonoma's Russian River. Drawing on the experience she gained helping friends who cater large events in San Francisco, she developed her own cooking style, featuring simple, elevated food with clean, fresh, bold flavors-and plenty of vegetables.

"I want to surprise you with simple tricks that take something from good to great," says Luedtke, who is passionate about growing her own vegetables and herbs, and travels widely to explore other cultures so she can seed their influences into her own ventures. Some of what ends up on your plate at boon eat + drink was grown in the garden of her hotel, and the bold and colorful El Barrio was inspired by a trip to Oaxaca, Mexico. She describes her cuisine as "seasonally-driven sexy comfort food. I definitely have a Mediterranean bent, as our climate is so similar," she says.

But Northern California is not without its challenges. The Russian River has a history of flooding, and the recent wildfires that decimated the region were particularly shocking and impacted the whole community. But Luedtke has learned a lot during those disastersabout herself, the people around her, and the environment. "Through the recent fires and past floods, I definitely learned how resilient our community is and how tight-knit we are. Everyone has come together to build an even stronger community and the support, not only for one another but for their businesses, is inspiring. Another thing I learned is to do more planning ahead, because it's not if these things will happen again, it's when. So it's been a good lesson in how to prepare."

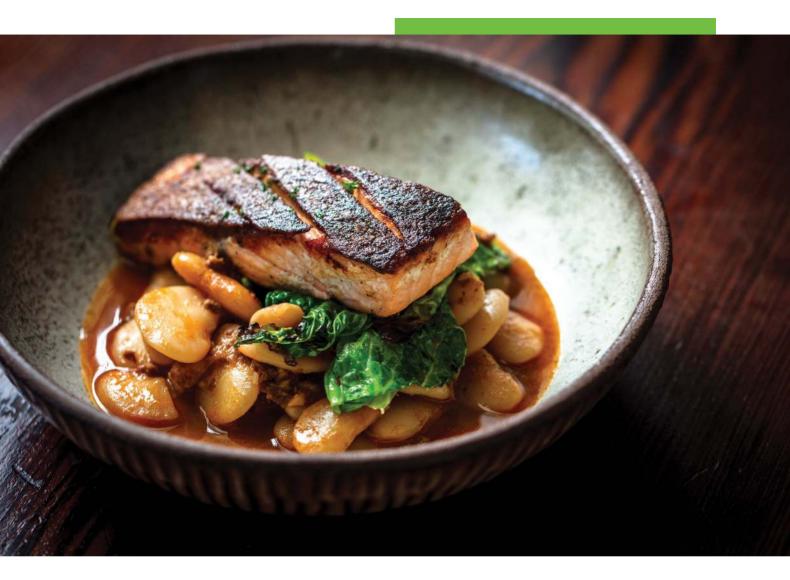
And Guerneville has the sort of working-class and gay resilience that means it will always bounce back. "Guerneville has been a gay destination for decades. It was actually in the 1980s and '90s that many gay men came to die up here during the AIDS crisis. There is such a rich history of this area if you dig into it, but I think it's such a great destination because it's so open and accepting and, frankly,

a melting pot of people. There are many longtime locals and multigenerational families here, mixed with the newcomers who have given up the fast-paced city life, and then there are the hospitality and vineyard workers," reveals Luedtke. "It makes for a fun and funky mix. The summers are so amazing and that is the time when San Francisco is cold, so this becomes an easy escape from the city and a haven of warmth, fun, and frolicking on the river."

In the last few years, in some ways thanks to Luedtke's investment in the town, Guerneville has become a yearround versus just a seasonal destination. She has been instrumental in helping to brand the town's appeal as a complete experience, encompassing great wine, food, the redwoods, and the river, so that there's something for everyone. But the transformation of this sleepy hamlet has not come without its accusations of gentrification from lowkey locals, and Luedtke has struggled to handle that criticism.

"It's hard at times because I'm working so hard to create great businesses, both for the locals and for tourists. Restau-





rants and hospitality is a really tough industry. We do it because we love it. I've created a lot of jobs for people and I have helped turn this town around. But there are some people who don't like change. Good news is, there are many more who love it, and it's clearly been a good thing for the community. I really just try to do my thing, do it well, work hard, and be kind to people."

Luedtke's brand, in case you were wondering, is named after her beloved rescue dog, Boon, which means "gift." He was a prime motivator in her decision to leave her corporate job—if she could create a lifestyle where home and work were in the same place, she could spend more time with Boon. But this gift came at a price: Luedtke lost her marriage due to the challenges of getting a resort and a restaurant up and running while being open to even more ventures. And as if running all these establishments isn't enough, Luedtke pitched the networks a food and travel show called *Lost in Taste*, which is based on the concept of exploring places through plates. You can watch it now on ReachTV. com, and it will also be launching on the Spirits Network early this year.

On my recent visit to Guerneville—and I highly recommend you make the detour if you're in the Bay Area—I was lucky enough to snag a table at the 36-seat boon eat + drink, and to sample Luedtke's seasonal California comfort food, which pairs perfectly with local wines. The menu has something for everyone, especially healthy eaters. The freshly-caught salmon was seared to perfection, and the vegan bowl was brimming with as much energy as Luedtke herself. But if you can't make it to Guerneville to experience the pleasures of "boon-town," make one of Luedtke's delicious dishes, recipe overpage.



COSTRACTO

## MAIN INGREDIENTS:

- Heirloom baby carrots
- Cilantro leaves
- Moroccan sauce (see recipe below)
- Toasted seeds (see below)
- Greek yogurt
- Smoking gun/chips

# To make the Moroccan sauce combine the following in a blender:

- 2 dry guajillo chilies toasted (deseeded)
- 1 tbsp yellow curry powder
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp toasted cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp toasted coriander seeds
- 1 tsp cayenne
- 1/4c packed brown sugar
- 1 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp whole grain mustard
- 5 ½ tbsp of cider vinegar
- 3/4 tbsp salt (more to taste)
- scant cup of olive oil (stream into blender)

### FOR THE YOGURT:

If possible let the yogurt drain out overnight by hanging it in strainer lined with cheese cloth over a bowl. This will make for an even thicker and luxurious texture to your yogurt. It's worth it. Salt the yogurt with 1 1/2 tsp salt so it has a nice flavor. Place yogurt in a stainless steel mixing bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Tuck hose of smoking gun under the plastic wrap and light the smoking gun. Once smoke has filled the bowl, turn off gun and let sit for about 10min, repeat the smoking process one more time leaving the bowl covered again for additional 10 min. This should infuse a nice smokey flavor.

## FOR THE TOASTED SEEDS:

I like to use a mix of black and white sesame, pumpkin and sunflower seeds. Toast seeds in dry sauté pan over medium heat until golden. In a food processor or spice grinder, gently pulse seeds a time or two to get them a bit broken up. If you do not have a processor simply put into a re-sealable bag and smash with a meat tenderizer. In a bowl season with a bit of kosher salt and a touch of olive oil so the salt sticks.

# FOR THE CARROTS:

Clean heirloom baby carrots (peel if needed) leaving 3/4 inch of the green stem on the ends. Blanch carrots starting in cold water with a generous amount of salt, bring to a boil. Drain off some of the hot water, mix in cold water to begin to stop the carryover cooking. Add ice to fully cool. Remove from water.

# TO FINISH:

In a large skillet or cast iron pan, take blanched carrots and sear over medium heat with a bit of olive oil to get some color. Add a few tablespoons of the Moroccan sauce to coat all carrots. Using a large spoon, spread a generous amount of your smoked yogurt on the serving platter. Arrange carrots on the platter on top of yogurt sauce, garnish with toasted seeds and cilantro leaves. Serve immediately.

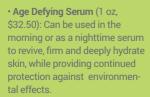
# Spring Skin

Say goodbye to the aging effects of winter with these cruelty free, fair trade products.

ge defying beauty products don't have to feel like a judgment of where we are in life. They can actually embrace and make the most of the natural process of aging. Alaffia, the 15-year-old natural beauty social enterprise, has developed the Age Defying Collection and it's on our Spring cleaning list. Proudly fair trade, cruelty free and alcohol-free, the collection is formulated to promote healthy skin and protect it from harmful environmental aggressors. Think of it as a natural-ingredient skin polisher and protectant. Alaffia's mission goes beyond skincare to community care. The Washington State and West-African organization has been on a mission to reduce poverty and increase gender equality, leading empowerment initiatives that have improved 80,000 lives. Through social enterprise, ingredients are ethically sourced from Alaffia's women's cooperatives in West Africa via Fair for Life standards. Some of these incredible ingredients feature in the Age Defying products including okra, mangosteen fruit and jasmine stem cells. (alaffia.com)









• Age Defying Mask (3.4 oz, \$18): Easy on/easy off face mask helps purify and detoxify skin to reveal a smooth, born-again complexion while supporting elasticity, firmness and overall radiance.



• Age Defying Face Scrub (3.4 oz, \$18): Exfoliates, resurfaces and refines the face by sloughing off dead skin cells and removing impurities, along with minimizing the appearance of uneven skin tone.



• Age Defying Body Scrub (7.5 oz, \$19.50): Supports positive aging from head to toe with a formula that regenerates the skin while deeply cleansing all over to reveal a healthy and balanced skin.

# Marketplace

# **Betterbois**



IN A SENTENCE: We make the most comfortable underwear for women, by women.

### WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICE SPECIAL:

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# Damron



IN A SENTENCE: We publish the Women's Traveller, in addition to the sesquiannual Damron City Guide and Damron Accommodations.

WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICE SPECIAL: We are proud to support through charitable organizations.

FIND US: damron.com

# The Highands Inn



IN A SENTENCE: Known as "A Lesbian Paradise," the Highlands Inn is a 13-room women's resort on 100 private acres in New Hampshire's White Mountains. WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICE SPECIAL: We have operated continuously as a popular lesbian destination.

FIND US: highlandsinn-nh.com

# Wolfe Video



IN A SENTENCE: We are the oldest and largest exclusive distributor of gay and lesbian films in the world. WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICE SPECIAL: In everything we do, we believe that Wolfe makes a difference, both inside and outside of the entertainment business. FIND US: wolfevideo.com

# Wild Rainbow African Safaris



IN A SENTENCE: Lesbian owned guided safaris that show you the real Africa while keeping safety, comfort, and fun top priorities.

WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICE SPECIAL: Owner and expert Jody Cole has traveled to Africa more than 75 times. FIND US: wildrainbowsafaris.com

# Real Estate



IN A SENTENCE: We are the Trusted Leader for 25 years in providing access to the nation's top LGBTQ realtors. WHAT MAKES OUR SERVICE SPECIAL: Free LGBTQ realtor directory - no cost or obligation for representation! FIND US: GayRealEstate.com

# The Grape Escape



Discover one of California's best-kept wine secrets.

## **Melanie Barker**



hich small winemaking region is so diverse in viticulture that it produces a seemingly vast selection of wines, from Albarino to Zinfandel? It's located halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles along California's famed Central Coast. Still guessing? It's Paso Robles, a wine-lover's paradise boasting more than 200 wineries and 40,000 acres of vineyards.

The reason for this bounty is a trio of factors: unique microclimates, 30 distinct soil types, and 46 grape varieties. Combined, these factors contribute to a cornucopia of wine made by family-owned vineyards. Many of these estates produce small batches (less than 5,000 cases) which means that if you're drinking wine from Paso Robles, you're drinking something special.

The region's remarkably varied terrain—from rivers to rolling hills—means that there are 11 separate viticultural areas within Paso Robles, with distinct differences in each sub-region's rainfall, temperatures, topography and soil. The dramatic swing in temperatures during the day and overnight, and the close proximity to the ocean just six miles away means that vines yield vibrant fruit with bold and dynamic flavor profiles.

If you're wondering where to start when sampling Paso Robles wines, consider the area's heritage grape, Zinfandel, first planted in the 1880s, then work your way back to an Albarino. But there is also Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc as Bordeaux varietals are the most planted in Paso Robles. And there are more Rhône grapes such as Syrah, Viognier and Roussanne here than anywhere else in California. Not bad for the New World!

pasowine.com











Clesi Sangiovese



McPrice Myers Grenache



Niner Cabernet Franc



Barr Albarino



Summerwood Marsanne

# TASTING NOTES

# Lone Madrone Bailey Ranch Zinfandel 2015

A very special wine with only 246 cases produced from vines in the rugged limestone hills. Aged in oak, this is smooth, medium-bodied choice to pair with roasted meats.

# Clesi Wines Sangiovese 2015

This is a delicious medium-bodied wine that perfectly accompanies pasta and pizza. Lots of juicy red fruits and a touch of spice make this easy-drinking and food-friendly.

# McPrice Myers Wines Grenache Sel de la Terre 2015

This Rhône style wine has bursts of cherry and tart cranberry but finishes with a mineral, savory note and a hint of smoke. "Salt of the earth" indeed!

# Niner Wine Estates Reserve Cabernet Franc 2014

This velvety wine is bursting with blackberry and dark cherry notes with a finish of mature tannins. You'll want to grill a juicy steak with this.

# Barr Estate Winery Albarino 2016

Made with grapes that parallel those from the Condado do Tea sub-region of Rías Baixas, Spain, this bright, zesty wine pairs with seafood and cheeses.

# SummerWood Winery Alta Colina Vineyard Marsanne 2016

Made by a Japanese winemaker, this lovely medium-bodied white has aromas of lemon curd and orange blossoms, opening up into a harmony of peaches, pears, and pineapples.





Emily Meyer

# Spring Suits You

Bespoke suits by women, for women.

**Anita Dolce Vita** 

I'm 100 percent out, so please shout it from the rooftops! I identify as a lesbian," says Emily Meyer, a Bay Area native and the owner of EM, a bespoke suiting line by women, for women. As queer style goes mainstream, and thus gets co-opted by designers who do not identify as LGBTQ but see queer aesthetics as a source of profit, it is refreshing to see lesbian labels that are thriving and that fundamentally understand some of the specific shopping experiences of our communities.

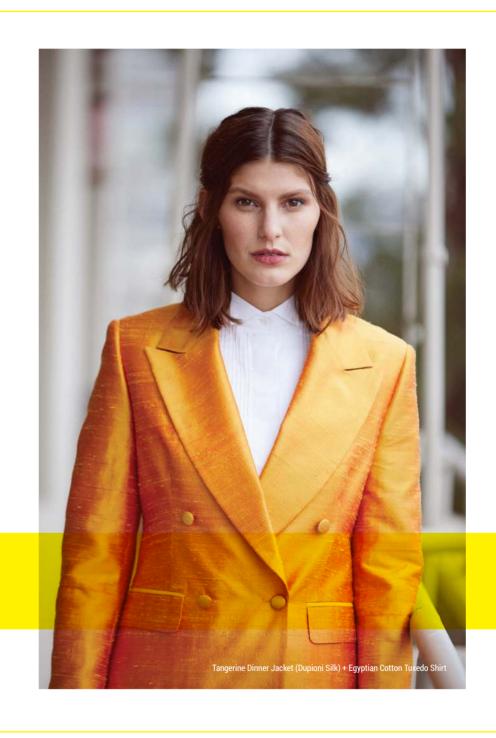
In fact, Meyer's own experience is what inspired the launch of EM. Meyer states, "I worked at a firm that was fairly formal, and I saw almost all of the male partners getting their clothes custom-made for them. I was so jealous, and in need, that I engaged a few of their tailors to make some clothing for me. It was a total failure. The fit, the quality, the service, the experience—it was all way off.

"Several years later, when I was getting married, I knew what I wanted to wear but couldn't find anyone to make it for me. I had a distinct vision of wearing a beautiful ivory dinner jacket, and I just couldn't find one anywhere! I ended up getting a jacket made for me, and it was gorgeous, but it was insanely expensive, and the brand was shutting down its women's line.

"After law school, I failed the California Bar Exam, and that was the unfortunate—or not—push that I needed to found EM, rather than pursue a career in law. It was really born, as many businesses are, in pursuit of solving a problem for myself!"

Though EM is rooted in Meyer's personal experience, the label transcends sexual orientation. Increasingly, women in general are in demand of quality tailored suiting that does not take a backseat to traditional menswear. EM designs and creates fully bespoke suiting









and separates for private clients, by private appointment, based on their unique body measurements, regardless of their identities. Their suits are meant to celebrate their clients in all their glory: their personality, their body, and their essence.

The brand, their suits, their clients, all embody the idea of AND > OR. That is, the idea that internal contrasts and contradictions make something richer, more interesting, and a more authentic manifestation of itself. It's a contrasting duality that Meyer likes to call "the Essential X: Practical x Extravagant, Masculine x Feminine, Traditional x Maverick.

"Everyone has an Essential X, and we want our suits to be a means by which our clients can fully manifest their own."

emilymeyer.com



# Toward 2020

Next election will be all about the women—and misogyny.

Victoria A. Brownworth

January 2017, when the 65,853,514 Americans who voted for Hillary Clinton were still in a state of shock and disbelief as Donald Trump's Inauguration Day loomed, I wrote a column asserting that 2020 would be the Year of the Woman. I wrote that after 244 years of male presidents, and a century after the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote, we would finally elect a woman president. My choices for president and vice president were Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), in either configuration: Harris/Gillibrand or Gillibrand/Harris. I predicted that one of those women would be our Democratic nominee in 2020.

In January 2019, both women an-

nounced their candidacies. Gillibrand is the Senate's most progressive voter and Harris is the Senate's most charismatic figure. Both women have been legislative mavericks, writing crucially important laws for women and minorities. Both are powerful actors in the Senate. In my political version of fantasy football, these two women get to be co-president, with Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), who announced her candidacy in December 2018, as attorney general and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MI) as secretary of state.

The only thing standing in the way of my prediction is a resurgence of the misogyny we faced in 2016, which battered Hillary Clinton, the first woman nominee of a major party, at every turn. If social media and the emails I receive



in response to my ongoing coverage of the 2020 race are any indicator, 2020 will be just as brutal as 2016—if not

more so.

villibrand.senate.gov

The media appear to have learned nothing from their errors in 2016, which contributed to putting Trump in the White House. When Warren announced, news sites declared that her time had passed—she should have run in 2016. When Gillibrand announced, her very first questioner asked if she was "likable." Both Harris and Gillibrand have been deemed "ambitious"—a word with a positive connotation when used about men, but a pejorative when used about women.

I have already received tweets and emails calling Harris and Gillibrand "corporate whores"—and this is from the left. The right has been so flummoxed by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and freshman congresswoman Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY14) that they haven't turned to attack the Democratic women who are running—yet. Republicans still hope they can push Democrats to vote for a white man even older than Trump, perhaps former vice president Joe Biden, who has come in last in two prior Democratic presidential primaries, in 1988 and 2008; or Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), who was crushed by Clinton in a land-slide in the 2016 primary.

The GOP has been floating these two men for nominee because they would be the easiest for Trump to beat. The tenor of the electorate has changed radically since 2016, when Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by 3 million, but lost the presidency because of the Electoral College. Also fueling that change has been the damaging and dangerous policies of Trump himself.

The midterm elections were declarative. Old Guard, establishment Democrats from the Biden and Bernie era were voted out in the 2018 primaries. Elected in their stead were young women like Ocasio-Cortez, at 28, the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. AOC, as she is known, beat out Rep. Joe Crowley, who had held the seat for 20 years and was a top Democrat in the House hierarchy.

In Massachusetts, Ayanna Pressley (D-MA07) beat out Mike Capuano, who had repped that district for 20 years. In



ocasio-cortez.house.gov

their editorial endorsing Pressley for the primary, the Boston Globe noted that Capuano had served his constituents well over those two decades. The editorial explained that it was a difficult decision to make, but that Pressley, now the first black woman elected to the House from Massachusetts, represented the change that had come to the district and to America.

The freshman class of the 116th Congress, many of them, like AOC and Pressley, women of color, signal that change. Deb Haaland (D-NM01) and Sharice Davids (D-KA03) became the first Native American women elected to the House. Davids is also a lesbian. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI13) and Ilhan Omar (D-MI05) are the first Muslim women elected to Congress. And Congress's

only out bisexual, Kyrsten Sinema, who had served three terms in the House, became the first woman senator from Arizona, elected to the seat previously held by Republican Jeff Flake in a hotly contested Senate race.

From Maine to California, there were 113 women elected to Congress in the massive Blue Wave of the midterms. That stunning number—and the women voters who drove it—set the tone for 2020. While some men genuinely welcome women in positions of political power, once Kamala Harris became the fourth woman running for president, pushback began in earnest.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed." Women, people of color, and LGBTQ people made those demands in 2018 and voted in more women, minorities, and queers than ever before. It was—it is—a game-changer.

The facts of the American electorate are irrefutable. And while investigations into what we now know to have been a hijacked election in 2016 are ongoing, the census data on America is its own statement: White men are a minority. The nation is over a third non-white and more than half female. Five states—California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada—are majority minority, as is the District of Columbia.

It is, quite clearly, our time.

Having several women in the Democratic primary has changed the narrative. No debate moderator will dare to start up without a female candidate



\*

after a bathroom break, as happened to Hillary Clinton during the 2016 primary. Having all these women in the race has made femaleness normative.

It has also revved up the misogyny. The threat posed to male authority and power by women seeking political office absolutely terrifies some men. In January, there were a few dozen articles about AOC, nit-picking her occasional misstatements while focusing on her clothes and lipstick. One conservative even posted a video from her college days of her dancing, as if that somehow invalidated her as a congresswoman.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who comes from the streets of Baltimore and knows a fighter when she sees one—and who has experienced decades of

sexism—has embraced AOC and other young women joining the House, seating them on prominent committees. Pelosi was the boogey(wo)man the GOP ran against in the midterms, featuring photoshopped pictures of her in the arms of a multi-tatted MS-13 gang member.

She bested them and exceeded even many Democrats' predictions as she ushered in the biggest wave of new Democrats in 40 years.

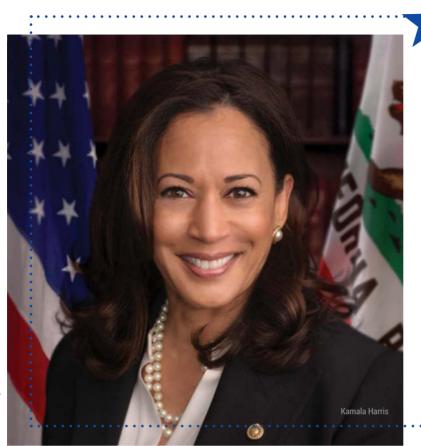
Pelosi's return as speaker—the third most powerful position in U.S. government—benefits women running for president. Every day, voters get to see a woman in a position of power standing her ground and moving the country forward. Pelosi has been formidable against Trump and the GOP, and her

plans for the Democrats are ambitious. She's laid out proposals on issues from voter suppression to healthcare to climate change. She's pushed back against every Trump initiative to undermine the rights of women and LGBTQ people. She's put women and people of color in critical committee positions.

The media tone on Pelosi shifted after Trump shut down the government for over a month, taking on an aura of respect previously missing. But will that newfound media respect for the speaker transfer to the women running for president? Unlikely.

And then there are those men grousing about the changes being wrought by Pelosi and what some have called her "gang" of congresswomen.

In January, a miffed Sen. Bernie



narris.senate.gov

Sanders declared in an interview in GQ that voters were choosing "women, black, Latino, and gay candidates" based solely on their identities. Sanders had made a similar assertion in 2016. In a video resurfacing as the 2020 primary begins in earnest, Sanders is on a stage speaking to a large audience and asserting that it was wrong to say, "I'm a woman! Vote for me!"

Except no one ever said that, just as no one is voting for women, black, Latino, or gay candidates solely on their identities.

But what if they did? In the days leading up to the midterms, the Twitter hashtag #RepresentationMatters was filled with women, people of color, and LGBTQ people writing out their yearning for candidates like themselves,

who look and sound like them. Our desire to be heard is hard to overstate. The tweets of Harris, Gillibrand, Warren, and Klobuchar reflect the many differences between women centering women and men eliding them—the tone, the nuance, the audience being spoken to: Women are their main audience. Recentering the majority is the first shift in the narrative we have all been raised with.

In 2018, the polls favored Biden, Bernie, and Warren. But now that the women have announced, the polls have shifted radically. The last week of January showed that Kamala Harris had moved from sixth place to first, with Warren in second place, and Gillibrand in sixth. Biden, Bernie, and Beto had all dropped in the polls.

My early assessment that women would rule the 2020 field stands, and no male candidate has the charisma of Harris or the quiet, measured patience of Klobuchar. The two tag-teamed at the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, catapulting themselves into the national spotlight with their grilling of the Supreme Court candidate. Kavanaugh was so rattled by Klobuchar's questioning that he attacked her. She sat stoic and unruffled while he shouted at her and later was forced to apologize.

There may be as many as 20 Democrats running for 2020, which will make for tiered and limited debates much like those the Republicans had in 2016. Harris and Warren will be in the top tier, but Gillibrand and Klobuchar may not be. Every aspect of these



omar.house.gov

women's lives will be examined— Harris's childlessness and her late marriage at 50 may become fodder in the run-up to the primary voting. Gillibrand's work on sexual assault won her enemies when she said former Sen. Al Franken (D-MI) should resign after seven women accused him of sexual misconduct. Warren's gaffe in trying to prove her Native American ancestry may come back to haunt her.

It's difficult to see how other Democrats would use such personal attacks against Harris after the debacle that was 2016. And 32 Democratic senators called for Franken's resignation, not just Gillibrand. In a general election, Trump would avoid such issues, because they open the door to his own history.

Women in politics get portrayed by the media as either young, hot, and clueless, as AOC has been, or old nagging hags. How many times did we hear about Hillary's laugh being a cackle? The point is always the same: to dismiss and diminish the very real accomplishments of women and highlight minor flaws in a wholly gendered way.

Hillary Clinton took the body blows in 2008 and 2016 to get us here. She should be president now, and it's a blight on our nation's history that she isn't. If Trump had won the popular vote by 3 million and lost the Electoral College, Republicans would have made sure he was in the White House. Democrats fought hard for Al Gore in 2000. There were weeks of counting

votes by hand. In 2016, why were there no recounts in those questionable states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, where voter suppression was rampant and Clinton lost by less than half a percent?

On Twitter, Clinton's pinned tweet is a quote from her November 9, 2016, concession speech: "To all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable, powerful, and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world."

Women are deserving of the representation we have never had in 244 years: a woman president. The only thing standing in our way is the unwillingness to give women the same chance to run this country that men have had since it was founded.



Sonoma County Tourism



bout two hours' drive north of San Francisco is Sonoma County. This parcel of paradise South of Mendocino, North of Marin and East of Napa has the distinct privilege of spanning picturesque countryside that encompasses redwoods, rivers and rocky coast. When you visit you will be entranced by the county's physical beauty and also by its bountiful produce, friendly residents, and multifarious attractions that encompass dining, wining and exploring. This is in many ways the best of California: sun, sea, mountains, forests, and peoplemany of them artists and alternative souls who care about the provenance of things and their place in the world. My visit coincided with the community bouncing back from the wildfires and I learned that people had come together and made renewal possible through their love of and loyalty to the environment and each other. After my visit I could see why!

#### Kendall-Jackson Wine Estate & Garden

Kendall-Jackson Wines are wellknown in America, especially their sophisticated varietals which encompass everything from chardonnay to zinfandel. But something you might not know about the estate: food is also a main attraction. Featuring produce from the culinary gardens onsite, the famous "K-J" holds an annual heirloom tomato festival, and offers seasonal farm-to-table dinner series with wine pairings. I was delighted to sample a superb meal, think beef short rib pasta with spigarello and midnight noon cheese paired with a glass of 2014 Jackson Estate Trace Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon. See, it's not all about the Chardonnay and Pinot. But it can be if you want. (kj.com)

#### Farmhouse Inn

When staying in wine country I have zero interest in big box or chain hotels. I'm looking for something more lowkey and local. And so it was a delight to discover Farmhouse Inn, a 4-Diamond luxury boutique on six rural acres in the heart of Sonoma. Twenty-five picture-perfect, cottage-like suites and a Michelin-starred restaurant built around an elegant 1870 farmhouse and a very modern swimming pool make this a charming choice of accommodation. No detail in your room is overlooked, from the welcome cupcakes to the luxurious bath crystals to enjoy in your soaking tub! The Farmhouse Restaurant presided over by Executive Chef Steve Litke and Master Sommelier Geoff Kruth is worth staying in for! And after a fresh farm-to-table meal you can gather by the outdoor fire pits for a nightcap and some smores, and maybe a session in the hot tub. (farmhouseinn.com)

#### Excursion to Healdsburg

Sonoma County has many delightful small towns and villages, each with unique charm. In the lovely, upscale Healdsburg you'll fine numerous boutiques and eateries worth a visit. Journeyman Meat Co. is styled along the lines of a modern butcher shop, salumeria and tasting bar that serves up handcrafted cured meats and seasonal fare paired with local wines. It's a combination of family tradition, old world knowhow and California's best produce. This is the perfect place for antipasti or drop in to stock up your larder (journeymanmeat.com). For a big meal featuring the region's bounty head to Valette, a large, stunning open plan restaurant born from two brothers' dream of creating a unique dining









experience that could showcase the best produce from the many local farmers. This is the place to take your time and eat well with someone you love. (valettehealdsburg.com).

#### Stop by Sebastopol

There are many cool townships in Sonoma County all with something to offer. Sebastapol, which has a lovely rural feel, is a place of rustic tranquility as well as cultural delights. Horse & Plow produces authentic, handcrafted wines and ciders made from grapes from organic vineyards in Northern California. Everything I tried had such crispness and acidity—simply delicious on its own or paired with local cheeses. Take home a bottle or two as a special gift! (horseandolow.com)

The Barlow is a unique precinct with a serious artisanal vibe. Stroll this marketplace and peruse handicrafts and homewares then have lunch and a libation. All products are local and the 'campus' is a great place to relax and stroll the 12 acres of local creativity, including Zazu Kitchen + Farm, from chef/owner/Next Iron Chef-contender Duskie Estes; Tamarind boutique women's clothing: Taylor Maid Farms coffee roaster; or the delightful MacPhail Family Tasting Room (macphailwine.com) which produces small-batch Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Rose from the Sonoma Coast. Russian River and Anderson Valley. (thebarlow.net)

#### Step Back in Time

Just four miles from the Sonoma Coast is a tiny town that looks like it came out of another century in the storied history of the West...and that's because it did! Duncan Mills looks like an old-timey movie set with its cute stores and boutiques selling antiques, provisions, handmade goods, art, and gifts reminiscent of a time gone by. This former Russian River mill town is worth a stop for coffee, lunch or to pick up a souvenir and a friendly chat with a local. (duncanmills.net)

#### A Lesbian Empire

We stayed for a night at the legendary lesbian-owned boon hotel+spa (boonhotels.com) in Guerneville, a modern. 14-room boutique hotel nestled among the old-growth redwoods of the Russian River Valley. Owned by Crista Luedtke (read more about her in our Food section) boon is a zen-like woodland retreat that makes a great, unpretentious LGBT getaway. Take advantage of the solar-heated saline pool and the collection of vinyl on your in-room turntable-or the 24-hour honor bar. This is the place to relax and kick back with your partner or friends. But it doesn't end there. When it comes to dinnertime, head half a mile down the road to boon eat + drink, an intimate modern California bistro also owned by Luedtke (eatatboon.com). Before you tuck in to her sumptuous seasonal offerings, grab a cocktail at her colorful, queer-ish tequila bar El Barrio (elbarriobar.com).

#### Of Rivers and Redwoods

Sonoma is smack-bang in the middle of nature and this is most obvious when you take a free, self-guided walk in Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve. I felt humbled and rejuvenated by the majestic and ancient Sequoia sempervirens (one of the gigantic trees is 1400 years old!), commonly known as the coast redwood. here is an 800-acre tribute to the powers of the natural world, located just miles from Guerneville's Main Street. (sonomacounty.com/articles/ armstrong-redwoods)

While on the topic of nature, I cannot recommend highly enough a respite at Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary. Osmosis is the only day spa in the U.S. that offers the Cedar Enzyme Bath-a rejuvenating heat treatment from Japan which uses enzyme-activated micro-wood chips as a form of healing. I swear that my feet, which often hold tension, not only relaxed during this treatment; they came out looking ten years younger! Osmosis is set in a lovely, rambling, Japanese-inspired property, and is the perfect place to reflect and rejuvenate with any number of treatments. (osmosis.com)

#### The Coast With the Most

On our way to the coast road we stopped at Fort Ross Vineyard & Winery (fortrossvineyard.com) which is positioned high on a stunning coastal ridge. Some of the most sophisticated wines I tasted on this trip were here, the product of owners Lester and Linda Schwartz's 53-acre vineyard. I don't ordinarily enjoy Chardonnay but I couldn't say no to any of Fort Ross's varietals! Could it be that the unique terroir contributed to the wines' magic? I think so.

The Sonoma Coast is wild and bewitching and the place to stay to truly appreciate its beauty is Timber Cove Resort, an epic full-service destination experience located on a dramatic bluff overlooking the rocky coastline and expansive ocean. Think 'rustic modern' but with all the sophistication you'll require to embrace California-style luxury. And as if the premium suites with unobstructed forest and ocean views weren't enough you also have grand common areas: the lobby is a great room, there is an outdoor living room, and the grounds provide coastal walks (timbercoveresort.com). Make sure you take a complimentary yoga class with the wise and down-to-earth Margaret Lindgren from Unbeaten Path Tours. When it comes to mealtimes, all your options are healthy. The new Coast Kitchen serves endless ocean views and organic meals (coastkitchensonoma.com).

But you're bound to want to explore the stunning, winding, rocky Sonoma Coast and when you do, make sure to stop at River's End Restaurant for a super-fresh lunch featuring local oysters and crab. Friendly service, the freshest flavors, and unbeatable panoramic ocean views from every table. (ilovesunsets.com/restaurant.html)

If you'd like to explore a quintessential Sonoma Coast town, tarry awhile in Bodega, where Alfred Hitchcock's movie *The Birds* was filmed. The Potter School House and the historic St. Teresa of Avila Church (photographed by Ansel Adams) are well worth the detour for a 'gram. (bodegabirds.com)

#### Petaluma Postscript

It was on our way back in the general direction of the Bay Area that we discovered a jewel of our trip, the lovely township of Petaluma. We stayed at Hotel Petaluma, a lovely and atmospheric property with the excellent The Shuckery seafood restaurant right off the lobby, which serves some of the freshest seafood I sampled on this trip. Let's just say I was in oyster heaven for the third time on this trip. This is a charming "old Sonoma" town with cafes, boutiques and lovely spot fro breakfast and brunch including the lovely Della Fattoria, which serves cof-

fee with innovative twists\_think local lavender and honey!

For a charming last-stop wine tasting, family-style, drop in to Belden Barns, owned by Nate and Lauren Belden, a couple who traded corporate city life for my favorite kind of agriculture (beldenbarns.com). Nate discovered this potential vineyard on a vacation to Sonoma and transformed it with his wife Lauren and her creative skills. The wines are fantastic, and be sure to place a ticket on the Wishing Tree. I won't tell you what I wished for, but my wish came true in this charmed and magical place of good hearts.

#### **Getting** around

You'll be drinking so it pays to spoil your group and hire a limousine with Pure Luxury Transportation, from San Francisco to Sonoma County. True to their name the service is unparalleled. Trust me. Just do it. (pureluxury.com)

#### sonomacounty.com









hen it comes to a getaway that is unique, exotic, hedonistic, relaxing, and oh-so-gay, you can't beat the Florida Keys and in particular, Key West. Drive there or fly there-either way you'll be a world away from the world's troubles. That diverse mix of Victorian, Conch, and Bahamian culture can't be found anywhere else in the world. Charming bed-and-breakfasts, blue ocean, booze aplenty (and boats with booze!), this is one of my favorite places for fun-and romance, too. Because, those sunsets mean that every day is a chance to celebrate the passage of time in the ultimate spectacle of ephemeral natural beauty-with somebody special.

You've probably heard about the gay guesthouses for men but my pick for women is the Gardens Hotel, a lovely oasis on Angela Street, within easy walking distance of Key West's infamous golden mile, Duval Street. Rich in history and architecture, the Gardens Hotel houses 23 guest suites set amidst a lush tropical garden and inground pool. A former private estate, the property has meandering grounds and lush, tropical landscaping that is always a pleasure to come home to. (gardenshotel.com)

On my first night in Key West I enjoyed a grand gay dinner with my friends at Azur, which is a unique dining experience enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. The restaurant feels like an intimate neighborhood secret and serves sophisticated Mediterranean plates in a super-friendly, gay-owned environment. (azurkeywest.com)

I love to get on the water as soon as I get to the Keys, and a great way to do it is with a Fury Water Adventures snorkeling tour. This low-key experience on calm seas is a lovely way to get out and explore some marine life. The staff is friendly and charismatic and the open bar helps you make friends, have fun, and not freak out should you come face-to-face with a barracuda. (furycat.com)

After working up an appetite head to Salute! On The Beach for a relaxed meal. This beachside cafe serves Italian-Caribbean fusion food using fresh vegetables and local seafood. Gaze at the ocean and fuel up for your next lark. (saluteonthebeach.com)

Explore some of Key West's most historic and charming sights, such as the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum, a grand property in which this famous author lived for almost 10 years and produced some of his best work. (hemingwayhome.com)

The other big literary entity who made Key West his home was the gay playwright Tennessee Williams (one of my heroes!) and a tour of the Tennessee Williams Museum takes you into the life of one of the greatest American playwrights of the last century.

A visit to Key West would not be complete without a stroll through the Butterfly & Nature Conservatory where you are surrounded by hundreds of delicate and colorful butterflies, especially majestic, migratory Monarchs, flowering tropical plants and flamingoes! (keywestbutterfly.com)



la-keys.cor



For a guilt-free way to enjoy the famous Key Lime pie, take a Key Lime Bike Tour and explore the island's history, architecture, and culture—and cap it off with a stop at the Key Lime Pie Factory for a slice of frozen Key lime pie. (keylimebiketours.com)

#### OTHER GREAT ACTIVITIES

#### Night Kayaking at Ibis Bay

There's no better way to enjoy the twilight hours of Key West than on LED-lite stand-up peddleboards or keyeks. Led by an expert tour guide, guests can explore the noctumal underwater world of the tranquil and mirror-like lbis Bay when the coral and its creatures are most active. Not for the faint of heart or the physically unfit! (keywestpaddle.com/Nightpaddling. html)

#### Blu () Sunset Sall

Now celebrating its 23rd year, the Blu Q is Key West's exclusive LGBT water sports operator. Captain Steve's intimate and educational catamaran sunset sail features complimentary beverages and light bites plus excellent stories about the island. Steve is great company and expertly sails his craft so that you enjoy the very best vantage point of Key West's famous sunsets. (blugkeywest.com)

#### Barefoot Billy's let Ski Tour

Barefoot Billys offers a variety of water sport activities including Island Jet Ski Tours, Dolphin Watch & Snorkel, and rentals for getting around Key West









on land and sea. But I'll always be thankful to Billy's for teaching me how to jet ski and now I am well and truly hooked. (barefootbillys.com)

#### MUSI-TRY RESTAURANTS

#### Blue Heaven

Home to the most "heavenly" breakfast in Key West—think generous portions made with love—this iconic shuttered blue building has a century-old history of entertaining islanders in the historic Bahama Village neighborhood. The property is decorated with artworks and tchotchkes redolent of its varied history which encompasses everything from gambling to boxing matches refereed by Hemingway. (blueheavenkw.com)

#### Spencer's by the Sea.

With views of the sparkling Atlantic Ocean from both inside the restaurant and on the veranda, Spencer's by the Sea offers a memorable Key West dining experience for any time of day. But my favorite is their small-plate brunch—shareable plates paired with bellini or bloody Mary in an upscale atmosphere. (reachresort.com)

#### Latitudes on Sunset Key

On a small private island called Sunset Key is a restaurant with point-blank, picture-postcard sunset views. Latitudes is my choice for date night and sipping a classic cocktail before tucking into innovative seasonal dishes featuring local fish and fresh produce. Plus, it's fun to get the little boat there and back from Front Street. (sunsetkeycottages.com)

#### The Stoned Crab

Key West's freshest seafood, including the renowned stone crab claws, is found at the Stoned Crab, an open-air joint on Ibis Bay that has two private fishing boats that deliver daily catches of stone crab, lobster, Key West shrimp and a variety of local fish that end up on your plate! I'm a seafood snob and I highly recommend getting "stoned" here, which will happen if you order a couple of rounds of organic cocktails. (stonedcrab.com)

#### WHERE THE GAYS ARE

The Key West Business Guild recently celebrated 40 years of promoting the island as an LGBT travel destination. For more information on that, drop in to the Gay Key West Visitors Center on Duval Street. (gaykeywestfl.com)

But in all honesty, you're more likely to see the gayness after dark in the "Pink Triangle"—a cluster of LGBT bars, clubs, and rainbow crosswalks located around the 700 block of Duval Street. Duval is the town's main 14-block entertainment and shopping zone. There is so much to choose from, with every establishment being gay-friendly—and some places are more gay than others!

801 Cabaret: Sushi and the 801 Girls Drag Show offers nightly drag, karaoke three nights a week, and live music on Sunday afternoons in the main bar. The popular emporium is located in the heart of Old Town on the corner of Petronia and Duval streets. At least say hello to the lovely drag queens when you pass by this LGBTQ landmark. (801bourbon.com)

Also uniquely gay is a night out

at La Te Da cabaret. I was thrilled to see Christopher Peterson, master of impersonations, perform live (no lipsync!) and perfectly characterize iconic women such as Judy Garland, Liza Minnelli, Marilyn Monroe, Cher and others. The standard of performance here is as good as any big city cabaret I have seen. It's sophisticated but retains the true old-world Key West style which evokes what it was like to be gay back in the day. It's a dying art so millennials, grab a table and marvel. Before the show, be sure to dine at La Te Da's restaurant next door. Traditional food, served poolside if you can get that special table. (lateda.com)

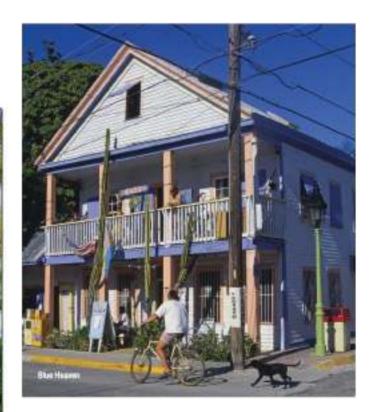
What's on for lesbians? Well, just as summer is ending but before holiday season begins is a sweet spot-Labor Day Weekend and Womenfest Key West! Then the island, which is often considered to be a gay male mecca, welcomes women from across the globe to an annual celebration that has become one of the largest gatherings of lesbians and friends in North America. Choose from a wide range of activities and events during four days of fun including standup comedy, live bands, pool parties, cocktail mixers... or simply laze by the pool with your favorite person. But be prepared to socialize. There's something about sharing an island with likeminded women-and an endless supply of alcohol-that means you'll be making new friends, as well as making memories. (womenfest.com)

To plan your trip go to the Florida Keys visitor website: fla-keys.com











Jess Salomon ( above left) and Eman Elhusseini (right) should be enemies, but this married Jewish-Palestinian couple make each other—and everyone else—laugh.



## How did you meet and was it love at first sight?

Jess: We met in Montreal, our hometown, at a comedy club. Eman was already on the comedy scene and I was just starting. It was *not* love at first sight. Does that happen? For us, it took two years, many drinks, and a male comic suggesting we kiss. Honestly, it even took a while for Eman to be friends with me.

Eman: She speaks with a low voice and we're always in loud bars. For two years, I just nodded at whatever she was whispering.

Jess: The point is, we needed to get to know each other's personalities, and that is maybe the most lesbian thing that I've ever said.

When did you become a couple, and who made the first move?

Eman: We are forever indebted to our





friend who bought us shots and encouraged us to kiss for his generosity and foresight. The kiss was so good, but I didn't think it'd be marriage good. I was up for a fling because I thought I was straight. Boy, was I wrong—and so happy I was.

Jess: It took a little while after that first move for us to become a couple. Eman thought she was straight, I was in love with someone else. I remember telling Eman not to get too attached. Meanwhile, in her head she was just checking Lesbian Fling off her to-do list. We only actually came out about our relationship publicly, in comedy, once we got engaged, which was four years after that first move. In retrospect, even though I was the one wanting to yell "THIS WOMAN IS MY GIRL-FRIEND" from the rooftops, it allowed us to develop our own careers for a while and was 100 percent the right move.

## The 'El-Salomons' combines both your surnames. How did that happen?

Eman: Jess got into Just for Laughs last year and they knew I would be a good comedy wife and join her, so they gave us two shows in Off JFL to do something together. I thought, But I'm only here to party, why are you making me work?

Jess: We had been putting out our weekly cartoon but hadn't really shared the stage together when JFL put the idea to us...they bought us a few shots and encouraged us to kiss. That's all it takes!

Eman: It's not easy working with someone you're in a relationship with. Jess collaborates with a few people, and I can assure you the way she laughs and jokes with them...it's not the same when we work together.

Jess: I was working on a script with my friend DeAnne and we were laughing

at the jokes we were coming up with. Eman walked into the room and was like, "Oh, okay, I guess it can be like this." But it is getting easier and more fun the more we do it. We're finding our groove, and I guess I'm trying to improve my tone when I give feedback, pretend we're just friends?

**Eman:** It's a challenge, but you know, we gotta give the people what they want.

# Comedy as a form is being questioned by social justice movements right now. Thoughts on that?

Eman: The comedy world has been a safe haven for male comics. This is slowly changing now, thank goodness! The only comics resisting PC culture are the ones whose comedy relies on being offensive. They should spend more time writing than complaining. With amazing movements like #blacklivesmatter, #timesup, and #metoo some men have been held accountable for the first time in existence, which doesn't make them very happy. I get it—they got away with literally everything for so long it's hard to adjust.

Jess: So many new spaces have opened up and different voices are being heard. It's exciting to hear new jokes and to hear from people who have historically been the butt of the joke! The most difficulty I have with jokes of mine not being appropriate is with conservative audiences shutting down before they even hear the punchline, because the premise doesn't line up with their worldview. In a conservative part of Canada, I

brought up Justin Trudeau and this woman yelled, "He takes it up the ass," and I said, "Interesting. So why do you think taking it up the ass is a sign of weakness?" They are very triggered by the words "Justin Trudeau" in Alberta.

#### Who makes the cartoons?

Eman: Jess came up with the idea a year ago after our dear friend and gifted illustrator, Jesse Brown, made our wedding invitations and my mother-in-law thought he made us look thin. We knew we weren't losing weight IRL, so we thought a skinny cartoon version of us would be perfect.

Jess: Eman and I write the cartoons and then we send them over to Jesse, who lives in London and is married to my childhood best friend. He adds this other laver of comedy. which is so great. The facial expressions! We're living in such politically charged times, where so much hatred comes from people's fear of what they don't know. We felt that a cartoon life could provide a nice counterpoint. Cartoons are a great way to broach big topics and dark topics with humor and sweetness, and that's what this cartoon aims to do. Because at the end of the day love is love, and, as everyone knows, gay people will be the ones to save us all.

#### Any big gigs this spring?

Jess: I co-host a monthly show at Union Hall in Brooklyn called The Lesbian Agenda every second Tuesday of the month. And look out for my debut album, *All the Best Choices*, with 800 Pound Gorilla Records.

Eman: I'm opening for my comedy hero and savior Patton Oswalt at the Beacon Theatre in New York and in Rhode Island in March. I'll be at the Halifax Comedy Festival in April and am planning on recording my second album in May.

theelsalomons.com



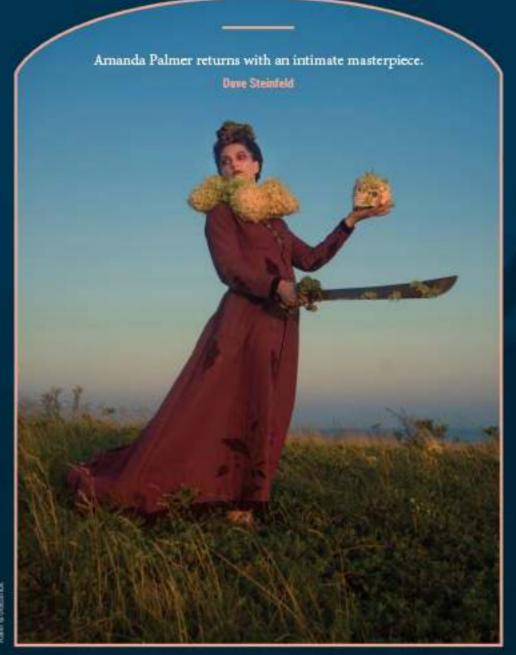




I'D LIKE TO THANK THE ACADEMY, MY AGENTS AND ALLAH...



# Between the Acts



and Collection

n the cover of her new album. There Will Be No Intermission, Amanda Palmer stands stark naked, wielding a sword. The image (and for that matter, the title) parallels the the album itself. Palmer has never really been one to separate life from art, but *Intermission* takes things to a whole new level. It's billed as her most personal album to date-and it's easy to see why. A lot has happened to Palmer since her last solo effort, 2012's Theater Is Evil, and much of it-losing a close friend to cancer, having an abortion, being misunderstood by the media, not to mention bearing witness to the atrocities that all of us have seen under Donald Trumpwasn't pretty. In the press release I was sent with the album advance, she is quoted as saying, "This isn't really the record that I was planning to make. But loss and death kept happening in real time, and these songs became my therapeutic arsenal of tools for making sense of it all." So Palmer isn't just naked literally on Intermission but also figuratively. She bares her soul.

Fans expecting something similar to Theater Is Evil will be disappointed. Then again, longtime fans know that Palmer never makes the same album twice. This is still an Amanda Palmer disc, of course, and it's a great one; it's not like she's pulled a Liz Phair and is now looking for mainstream acceptance and hits on the charts. But where Theater was a band album and sported a New Wavey rock n' roll sound, Intermission goes in a completely different direction. With few exceptions, this album is just Palmer and her piano. There are only 10 songs on *Intermission*, yet the album runs over an hour in length. That is due not only to the songs themselves-most of which are between five and 10 minutes long-but to the fact that there are shorter instrumental interludes between each of the longer pieces. Intermission was funded entirely by Patreon and recorded in L.A. with producer John Congleton.

The 10 proper tracks on *Intermission* add up to a song cycle in which nothing feels out of place. The



centerpiece, to these ears, is "A Mother's Confession," which clocks in at more than 10 minutes, arrives three-quarters of the way through, and is basically a diary of Palmer's experiences as a new mom (her son, Ash, is now 3). It's a stream-of-consciousness piece, alternately frightening, funny, and poignant. We follow Palmer from place to place as she grapples with being a new mom and also deals with the day-to-day challenges all of us face. At the song's climax. Palmer sings. "I wonder if I should have had a child." When I tell her that was a pretty ballsy thing to write, she replies, "I really wanna tell the truth. I'm never gonna be the kind of person who [will] paint a picture of motherhood that's all about balance and roses and home-cooked soup. I'm gonna continue to be rock n' roll..."

"That song was written when my baby was 4 months old, and I was traveling solo, with a baby on my back, to visit [some] friends in the States," she says. "There is this really insidious narrative that's foisted on us as women, that we can be useful as artists or we can be useful as mothers, but we can't do both," she adds. "And even if we intellectually know that that's not true, the fear is very hard to escape...I [also] think women all over the world are waking up to the power of storytelling. And particularly

the power of shameless storytelling. We have been disconnected from one another by the patriarchy for so many years. [Sol to see a whole new generation of women waking up to the fact that when we unabashedly tell one another the truth, and share our experiences, this is the antidote to what has [kept] us down for so long—it's a real revelation. Even for someone [like me] who has been a feminist from Day One," she says.

"Even I am waking up to how much fear I have had around other women and how competitive I've been. Watching #MeToo happen, and watching an open celebration of women who support one another, has totally changed the playing field. It's no longer cool to be fiercely independent and competitive. And that is, in my opinion, the ticket out of this hell-women realizing that we have much more power when we help one another and share our stories with one another than when we try to defeat and compete with one another."

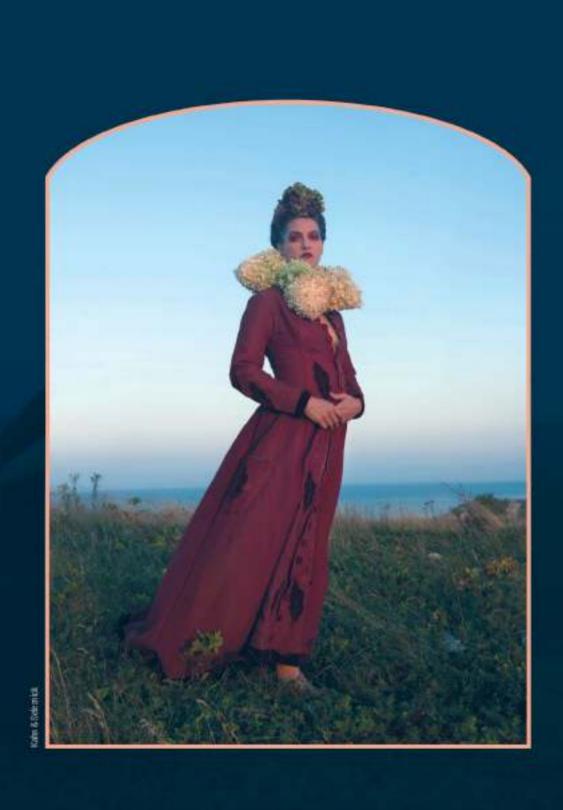
The second proper song and the first single from Intermission is also the only one that could really be considered rock n' roll. "Drowning in the Sound" is an excellent tune, but it's a little more abstract and a lot more produced than the other songs. Its theatrical arrangement sometimes recalls the genius of Kate Bush. The lyrics are also unusual in that they were inspired not only by Palmer's personal experiences but by pop culture, global issues like climate changeand even her fans! "That song was written as an exercise in fast art," she explains. "It was a speed test. I booked two days in the studio [and told my patrons], 'I don't have a plan. I'm writing a song tomorrow, recording it the next day. I wanna know what's going on with you. So hit me with comments.' And I cut and pasted a lot of their comments into the song! I specifically put together an 'exquisite corpse' of what was going on in my life and in my head, and their comments-and tied it all together with metaphor. I also had been listening to *Dilate* by Ani DiFranco non-stop that week." Not the first time she has cited Ani as an influence.

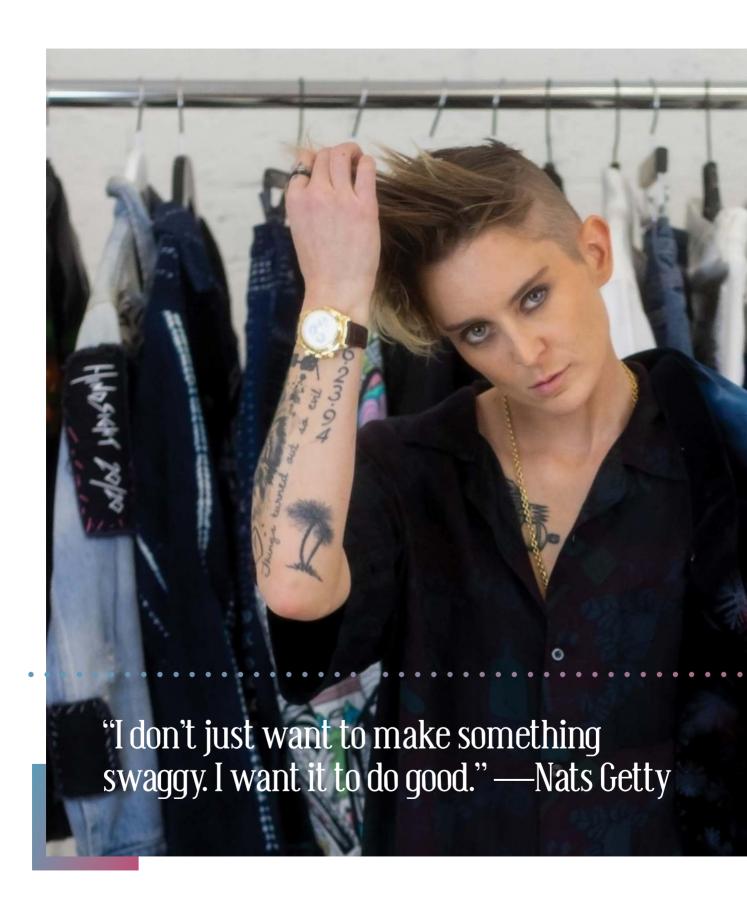
Palmer pays more direct homage to another influence elsewhere on the album. "Judy Blume" is a song about the woman who wrote groundbreaking YA novels like Are You There, God? It's Me Margaret. "I didn't recognize how massive an influence on me she was until one day it hit me like a ton of bricks...It's not that she didn't make the cut-she never occurred to me! When I went backward and did the math and thought about her books-and the topics-my brain just exploded. [But] it was not until I wrote that song that I did a little homework and realized how lucky I was as a kid in Massachusetts to take for granted that her books would be freely available. I had no idea that her work was so heavily censored and burned in other states in America... . So that was a 'check your privilege' moment. I was privileged to grow up with Judy Blume's books."

Even though she is married to writer Neil Gaiman. and is now a mom, Palmer is still refreshingly candid about her sexual orientation. "I have slept and hopefully will continue to sleep with everybody," she tells me with a laugh. "In the immortal words of Margaret Cho, I'm not gay or straight or bi; I'm just slutty. I've always identified as bi, but I [prefer to] identify myself as wide open. No pun intended."

Palmer is planning an extensive tour in support of Intermission. She will kick things off in mid-March. right after the album is released, and hopes to stay on the road most of the year. It will be an unusual tour for her in that it will not feature other musicians. This will just be Palmer and her piano-intimate and minimal-performing mainly in theaters. And in case you're wondering, there will be an intermission at every show. "I'm really excited to take this album on the road to parts of this country that are nowhere near the coasts," she says. "I'm really excited to take this record to Kansas and Utah and states [like that]. In the shadow center of Trump, I'm excited to go out on the road and be more flagrantly political than I've ever been."

amandapalmer.net







# Rainbow Rebel

Inside the world of Nats Getty's lifestyle brand, Strike Oil.

Story: Merryn Johns and Rachel Paulson

Photos: Stephanie Saias
Hair + makeup: Hilary Montez

his past winter, in the Strike Oil studio in Culver City, we caught up with Nats Getty for an exclusive preview of her new artistic lifestyle brand, modeled by Nats, 25, and her fiancée, Gigi Gorgeous. While sipping on LGBT-brand Equality Vodka Moscow Mules (Gigi), and a few beers (Nats), to a soundtrack of Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber, and Blink 182, Nats explained the motivation behind her Strike Oil brand and treated us to a display of her unique bespoke clothing. Taking designer pieces, Nats repurposes them with print, paint and appliqué, creating one-off signature pieces that embody her rebel-with-acause spirit.

To fully emerge us in her rock star-meets-street-artist aesthetic, we moved outside the studio to the alley where Nats showed us the action painting process she applies to largescale works. The message is in the method: Express yourself.

When we hung out in New York last year, Nats drew our attention to the baseball jersey she was wearing, which bore the mottos "Zero Judgment" and "I am. We are. Let's be." Nats told us she was working on a number of projects but all of them had in common the idea of giving back. "For every collection I do there will always be at least one piece that is 100 percent charity-based," she says. Recipients have included GLAAD and the Los Angeles LGBT Center. She also held a live-painting event and vigil onsite after the Orlando Pulse shooting.

The T-shirts and hoodies she's designed feature checkered neon rainbow prints or have the rainbow flag embroidered on them as symbols of LGBTQ solidarity. "What's different about Strike Oil is, I don't just want to make something that's cool or swaggy—I want it to do something good," she says. "I also want people who are wearing Strike Oil to feel like they're part of a gang of people who are like-minded."

Nats has received the full support of her mom, Ariadne, and her brother, August, a fashion designer (he is the youngest designer ever to show at New York Fashion Week). "We love each other so much, the three of us. We're like a little tripod," she says. Nats came out to her mom when she was 16. After boarding school in England,

a tattoo of her first girlfriend's name (it was removed not long after).

Although Nats failed art in high school her artistic spirit could not be suppressed, and she went back to art six years later. Inspiration came in the form of disappointment: she'd purchased a designer jacket and felt pretty special about her splurge until she saw someone else wearing the exact same jacket. She went home and took some White Out and "went crazy on it." She then expanded on the idea, finding vintage items on eBay and augmenting them just because she enjoyed it. Now she designs garments in her studio such as satin bomber

Downtown. I make sure I can make something that some posh lady on the Upper East Side can buy." For example, Ming Dynasty influenced ceramic vases with cheeky motifs of pot leaves. Her mom will give her a Fendi bag and say "Strike Oil it." And there's more affordable tees, tanks, bandanas, and hats.

This lifestyle brand is also a philosophy that fits anyone from skater kids to celebrities. Halsey owns two Strike Oil jackets and Nats envisages other people like Hayley Kiyoko, Young MA, or Cara Delevingne owning her swag. "People who are authentic" she says. "I love people who are shamelessly themselves. It's not the name or what they do. It's what they are."

Fashion is more queer-friendly now, she says. "I personally think my generation and younger have watched the fashion industry, and I feel that so many people got bored of having to stick to these rigid rules." Influenced by artists such as Andy Warhol, Keith Haring and Basquiat, Nats firmly believes that "Creativity is all about self-expression."

It's heartening to see that a patriarchy founded on oil has now evolved into a female and gay expression of art and philanthropy. But Nats says the impulse to pay it forward was always there in her family. "My great-grandfather is John Paul Getty, and when he was asked the key to success he said, 'Rise early. Work hard. Strike oil.' That's what he lived by and that's what he

## "I love people who are shamelessly themselves. Creativity is all about self-expression."

Nats moved back to L.A., cut her hair, dressed as a true tomboy, and started dating a girl. "I was scared to tell my mom and one day it slipped out and my mom was like, 'Nats, duh.' " After all, as a kid of 4 or 5 Nats was out climbing trees and riding skateboards. "My mom completely adored it, and she encouraged it." She was upset, however, that Nats had gone and got

jackets that are reversible and feature a Strike Oil logo or custom print. "Anything that I would want to wear, I make it," she says.

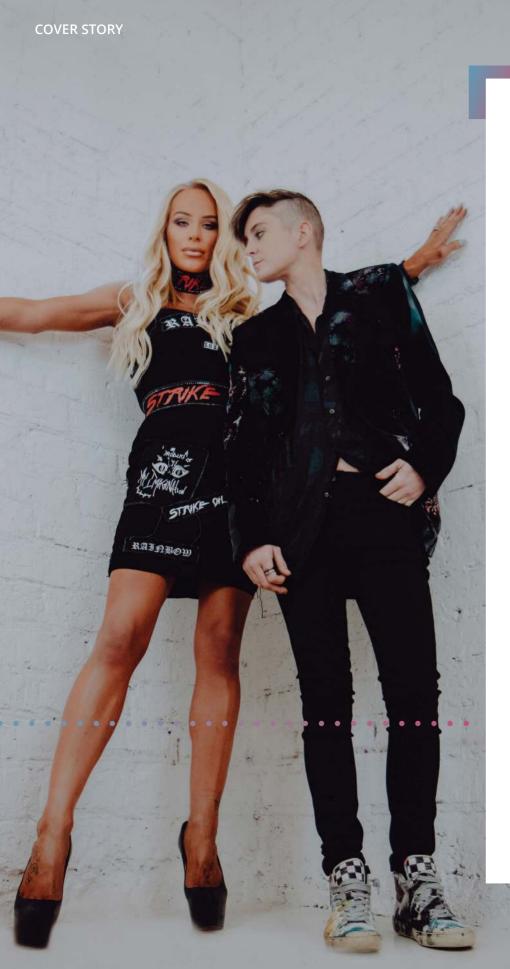
She makes capsule collections and drops them each month on social media. "When I first started designing it was always art and activism mixed together. The aesthetic of Strike Oil is street-wear with a twist, Uptown and

**COVER STORY** 

did. He was savage in business, but what he did later in his life with the Getty Villa and the Getty Museum and gifting them both to Los Angeles resonates with me so much, because he wanted to bring beauty and art and history into the world and let anyone and everyone experience it." Nats' grandfather was also philanthropic and her mother is, too. For several vears now Ariadne has worked with Sarah Kate Ellis to further the cause of GLAAD. "Strike Oil is a tribute to my family DNA," says Nats. "That's where a lot of my feelings of wanting to do good in the world come from."

The family has also expanded to include many of Nats' and August's queer friends, including Gigi, who Nats met while they were modeling at one of August's fashion shows. They later bonded on a trip to Paris. At the time, both Gigi and Nats were getting over bad breakups. Nats was at a low point and Gigi was dealing with adversity with her characteristic positivity. "Gigi makes me laugh," says Nats. "I didn't even know that I could laugh that hard. No matter what's going on she's able to say 'Let's get into it,' and we have fun. She has had to fight every single day of her life to be who she is. I fell in love with Gigi's magic. We fell in love with each other's souls. I've never had someone support me and encourage me as much as she does."

Gigi wears the Strike Oil label with pride. "When Nats and I first started dating, she had beanies, hoodies and



trucker hats in all different colors that were not for sale yet, so I started off wearing those when I was at her place. Now it's like second nature to me to be in her brand!

"What I love most about Strike Oil is that you can dress it up or dress it down. For instance, we were recently in Davos for the World Economic Forum and I wore the Coachella Long Sleeve Button-Up Camp Shirt with a black Balmain high-waisted skirt. Nats wears the same top untucked with either a pair of dress pants to be more formal, or jeans for a more casual look. No matter how you wear these pieces, they look gorgeous and they're so high quality!"

She's fond of the Gigi Gorgeous Satin Bomber Jacket. "It's reversible, so I can wear it no matter what mood I am in. If I'm feeling super girly, I can rock the hot pink side. If I want to be more street style, I can rock the print lining side."

Somewhat of a muse to Nats, Gigi is adamant about her partner's creativity. "I love talking her though ideas whenever she asks for my input or advice, but ultimately, everything are Nats' ideas and concepts. She's the most creative person I know!"

And for those who may criticize this trans woman-lesbian union, Nats adopts a Strike Oil stance: "I just take that hate and turn it into love."

strikeoil.com





"Strike Oil is a tribute to my family DNA."

long romantic relationship with another



woman, and how the mistress of Emily Dickinson's brother-who put together Emily's first books of poetry-created the myth of the disturbed recluse who would not see anyone at all and did not wish to publish."

Olnek weaves those details into her film, constantly juxtaposing the story we've been told with the story that has quite literally been erased.

The star of Wild Nights with Emily is the comedian Molly Shannon. If that casting makes you wary that this is some extended Saturday Night Live slapstick, it is anything but. Olnek attended NYU with Shannon and was always eager to work with her. "The brilliant director Robert Altman once said of Molly Shannon that she was 'some kind of genius'-and the description could not be more apt. She is truly sui generis. When you are telling the story of a great mind, of an American original, I think it is important that the actor playing the part themselves contains the 'multitudes', as Whitman might have put it, of the character. This is the story of one of the great misunderstood women in history. Not only was she brilliant, but she was also warm, funny, and full of life. I felt that if Molly Shannon played Emily Dickinson, people would finally understand who Dickinson was."

Shannon's portrayal shatters all our preconceptions about the poet-and about Shannon herself. Shannon's performance is composed, thoughtful, surprising, robust, witty, sensual, and above all believable.

In counterpoint to Shannon's Emily is Susan Zeigler, who plays Sue Gilbert, and has worked with Olnek in other projects. Zeigler's strong performance as Emily's devoted and loving life partner portrays a woman who is as dedicated to publishing Emily's poetry as she is



committed to her own work as a writer. editor, and mother of three. Shannon and Zeigler have tremendous chemistry.

Dickinson wanted to be published, but publishers were leery of her singular style. Gilbert herself declares when she first reads the poetry, "It doesn't rhyme." One would-be publisher, Thomas Higginson (Brett Gelman), takes a pencil to one of Emily's poems and notes, about a signature element of her work, "These dashes-are they really necessary?" Only 11 of Dickinson's poems were published during her lifetime.

There are moments of delightful, insouciant cleverness in Wild Nights with Emily, from the opening sequence, which immediately debunks the myth of her as a chaste recluse: to scenes of Emily baking bread and writing lines of a poem in pencil on the back of a recipe card; to her pretending not to have any poems to give to Sue and then pulling a sheaf from behind her dress sash, while another poem is twirled up in her hair, and still another is folded tightly and placed inside her locket. That last, Sue's face tells us, is personal.

Wild Nights with Emily explains how the women, born just nine days apart in 1830, met as teenagers, as they read from Shakespeare together. On their way home, Emily confesses her love. Susan, at first confused, says, "I couldn't kiss you as I would a man." She then becomes the arbiter of the women's future, marrying Emily's brother so that she and Emily will never be separated,



what was actually transpiring in the life of the poet. Some of these are hilarious, others unsettling. As Olnek explains, Mabel and Austin had their trysts at Emily's house, so she stayed in her room when they were there, creating the impression that she was a recluse.

Wild Nights with Emily is a film about how lesbian stories get corrupted and erased. It's smart, engaging, and deeply moving. Olnek says, "I hope viewers will take heart in this story of a great romance and lifelong relationship between two brilliant women. And stay strong! Life can offer many unfortunate twists and turns and hard knocks; but if you keep trying, people will hear you in the end and history will remember your efforts. And, I hope it will win some new converts over to enjoy Dickinson's poetry. She is not the creepy, morbid recluse you thought she was-she had a good time. And she also made it into the literary canon!"

Wild Nights With Emily opens April 2019.

living next door to each other until Emily's untimely death at 56.

The story of lesbian erasure—of lesbian lives retold and misrepresented by historians and others through the lens of heteronormativity—is as old as Sappho herself. But as Olnek reveals in *Wild Nights with Emily*, the relationship between the two women was quite literally rubbed out by Mabel Todd (Amy Seimetz), the editor of the first book of Emily Dickinson's poems.

Todd had a long affair with Emily's brother, Austin (Kevin Seal). She felt the poems to Sue were too obviously romantic and wanted Sue's name taken off them. It was she who, while touring with the book, fed rumors of Emily's spinsterhood as a recluse. Olnek juxtaposes Todd lecturing about Dickinson with scenes of



## The Art of

# SAME SEX



Beth Suskin and Leslie Cohen

Beth Suskin (left) and Leslie Cohen (right) are partners in life—and in LGBT history. Here, Cohen shares their personal and public story of "gay liberation."



A lesbian reflects on the 50th anniversary of Stonewall.

Leslie Cohen



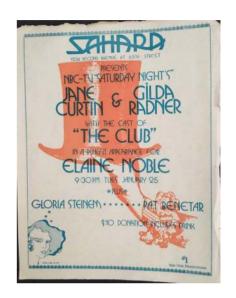
Beth Suskin, my partner (and now wife) of 42 years, and I were the models for Gay Liberation, the sculpture that now resides in Christopher Park across from the Stonewall Inn. Since the sculpture's unveiling in 1992, we have stood before it many times, staring at our doppelganger selves. We have witnessed drunken men slouched on the park bench, resting their heads in our laps; children climbing on us like monkey bars and sitting on our knees; grown men and women crying openly before it, overcome with emotion, perhaps remembering the humiliations they'd experienced when they were taunted, arrested, forced to hide their true identities. Gay men and lesbians from around the world have also come to see the sculpture as a symbol of gay pride and as a confirmation of the great progress that has been made toward their visibility and acceptance.

It is astounding to us that our love for each other is publicly signified and immortalized in this way. However, neither our love story nor the story of the sculpture can be told in full without mentioning Sahara, the first New York City-area nightclub owned by women, for women. Opened by me and my three female partners in Manhattan in 1976, it was an elegant oasis in a desert of oppression against women, both gay and straight; a place where beautiful women found their voices and discovered a safe space to express who they were. Luminaries came to witness and bask in its welcoming scene, nurturing a generation of women who would become the luminaries of the future. Beth and I discovered our love for each other against the backdrop of Sahara; for us, the two are inextricably woven together.

Isn't it strange how the most horrific and wonderful events of your life can happen within days of each other? In early November of 1979, three weeks before Sahara was forced to close, I received a phone call from an old friend, the artist David Boyce, who worked at the Sidney Janis Gallery which represented George Segal, the important and influential American artist (1924-2000). I knew David from my previous career as an art historian. I hadn't spoken to him in ages. He told me that Segal was commissioned to create a sculpture commemorating the 1969 Stonewall Inn uprising in New York City. The commission stipulated only that the work "had to be loving and caring, and show the affection that is the hallmark of gay people...and it had to have equal representation of men and women." It would be a gift to the city of New York.

David called to ask me if I'd be willing to be a model. He was having a tough time finding people, because anyone who agreed to sit for the sculpture would be exposing themselves to the possible consequences of being outed. I had already outed myself in a big way when I left the art world and opened Sahara, and Beth was so proud of our love for each other that she adamantly wanted us to be visible. When I told Beth about the opportunity to be a part of this historic sculpture, she was ecstatic. Participating in the sculpture is how we'd finally actualize our aspirations to be visible and help to legitimize same-sex love to the world. Modeling for the sculpture was not an issue for us. It was an honor.

Within a few weeks, Beth and I were sitting in George Segal's studio in South Brunswick, N.J., discussing what the sculpture would look like. As exciting and revolutionary as the idea was, it would take another 13 years for the sculpture to finally be installed. The 1970s were a tumultuous time; in some ways they were just a continuation of what the 1960s had started. Women, African Americans, gays and lesbians, all were marginalized people continuing their fight for equality. If





Sahara, the first women-owned lesbian bar in New York City, opened in 1976 as a club for lesbians and their friends, with celebrities such as Jane Fonda, Patti Smith, Pat Benatar, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and others dropping by or performing.



it seems like just yesterday when those were the issues of the day, that's because now, 50 years later, we still struggle to gain visibility and equality for gay and transgender Americans. Back then, it was the infamous Anita Bryant who was most stridently opposed to gay and lesbian rights.

Today, we have Donald Trump and Mike Pence. This fervent conservatism and return to "family values" was foreshadowed nearly 40 years ago in the controversy surrounding the Gay Liberation sculpture. In an article in the New York Times on August 28, 1980, the various disputes were delineated; some Greenwich Village residents argued that it was not the homosexual subject matter that was the issue, it was the location. They just didn't want Gay Liberation in Christopher Park. Others were just brazenly homophobic. Homosexuals complained that the proposed sculpture was not inclusive enough; that it did not include a black or a Latin person; that the sculptor was not gay. The Times article also cited an unnamed gay activist who was distributing petitions "protesting that the figures in the sculpture are 'grotesque stereotypes offensive to all in the community."

The four of us who'd modeled for the sculpture were exasperated. The senseless arguments for and against it finally came to a head in September of 1980, at a volatile jam-packed public hearing held by the Parks Committee of Community Board 2 (which represented Greenwich Village). In David Boyce's reaction to the brewing battle, he suggested that we make T-shirts with words "grotesque stereotypes" emblazoned across the front, referring of course to the "offensive" quote in the *Times*.

Some of the comments made at the hearing, punctuated by shouted obscenities, were so vitriolic and homophobic that by the time it was my turn to speak at the lectern I was quite upset. The four of us stood in front of the crowd of over 200, wearing our "grotesque stereotypes" T-shirts. I approached the microphone and addressed the audience:

We are "the grotesques stereotypes offensive to all in our community," referred to in a recent New York Times article. (Part of the audience, seeing the irony, erupted into loud applause.) This is not meant to be an explicit representation of Stonewall. It is much bigger than that—it represents liberation, by openly showing our love for one another in a visual medium. There is no stronger statement than that, in our quest for liberation. The bottom line in our struggle has always been visibility. I wonder, if this were two heterosexual couples instead of homosexual couples who modeled for this sculpture, which celebrates love and respect, would there be such a brouhaha, such antagonism as we've seen here tonight? Or, instead, would we all be sitting here tonight celebrating the fact that the Village has now become the recipient of a major sculpture by George Segal, a pre-eminent contemporary artist celebrated throughout the world?

Gay Liberation was finally unveiled in Christopher Park, across from the Stonewall Inn, in June 1992. On June 24, 2016, then-president Barack Obama officially designated the Stonewall Inn and the area surrounding it, including the Gay Liberation statue, as the Stonewall National Monument, making it the first National Monument in the United States to be designated as an LGBT historic site. Since then, Gay Liberation, the sculpture, has gained more and more visibility around the world and has become an icon and a pilgrimage site that is visited by thousands of people every year.





As one of his last executive orders, President Obama declared Stonewall Inn and Christopher Park in New York City, including the sculpture Gay Liberation depicting Cohen and Suskin, as the first National LGBT Landmark in America.



# A World of Pride

New York City hosts WorldPride 2019 for the entire month of June as part of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising.

Merryn Johns

take some comfort in the fact that in a time of global fragmentation, WorldPride, which highlights LGBT causes on an international scale, is still going strong since its inaugural 2000 event in Rome. This year, New York City gets to host the party, which is fitting since the Big Apple is still the most popular destination for LGBT travelers, according to the latest travel survey from Community & Marketing Insights (CMI). This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, wide-

ly regarded as the beginning the modern gay rights movement. The year 2019 marks the first time that WorldPride will be celebrated in the United States, and the timing couldn't be better. The world's media capital will provide a fitting backdrop for this year's Pride events: Not only are we celebrating our LGBT identity but we're joining together to defy all the attempts to roll back our rights, even as right-wing administrations gain prominence around the globe, including here in the U.S.





istopher Gagliardi



Over 4 million people will descend upon New York City for the largest LGBTQIA+ gathering in our history," said Chris Frederick, NYC Pride's managing director. So here's a little taste of what WorldPride has in store for you, in addition to millions of people celebrating millions of moments of pride—together.

## HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE, JUNE 24–25

NYC Pride's Human Rights Conference is a two-day gathering of activists, artists, educators, media, policymakers, students, and others engaged in global LGBTQIA+ rights. Be part of this diverse discourse on human rights, with performances, presentations, and discussion of the policies that will shape our lives for years to come.

#### OPENING CEREMONY, JUNE 26

NYC Pride's WorldPride 2019 opening ceremony will kick off a slate of unforgettable events. Expect emotion, excitement, and some exceptional talent.

## STONEWALL 50 COMMEMORATION, JUNE 28

NYC Pride will commemorate the historic Stonewall uprising by taking the Rally back into the streets! Even though 50 years have passed since one night changed the course of LGBT history, our rights are being eroded by the current political envi-

ronment. Join community activists, organizers, politicians, and more and take a stand against oppression. We're here, we're queer, for another 50 years!

#### PRIDE ISLAND, JUNE 28-30

Imagine your very own queer cultural oasis in New York City. Pride Island is a multiday LGBTQIA+ experience on Hudson River Park's Pier 97, in the heart of the "gayborhood" of Hell's Kitchen. Dance with your girl, hang out with pals, and immerse yourself in gueer music talent.

#### PRIDEFEST, JUNE 30

This vibrant street fair combines diverse exhibitors, entertainers, and activities for a day of fun and celebration in the name of equality. Feel like a real New Yorker as you hang out with thousands of local residents and families. Stroll the streets, sample food, people watch, and purchase artisanal souvenirs from the folks who support our community on every level from grassroots to corporate.

#### NYC PRIDE MARCH, JUNE 30

The first NYC Pride March was held in 1970, the year following Stonewall, and it has since become an annual civil rights demonstration as well as an expression of LGBTQ pride. Now the largest and longest LGBTQIA+ march of its kind in the world, this year it will be the ultimate celebration of

our lives—including those lost and our community in its most visible form.

#### CLOSING CEREMONY, JUNE 30

An incredible month will climax at one of the most iconic tourist destinations in the world—Times Square—featuring a performance by everyone's favorite out lesbian rocker, Grammy Award—winning singer-songwriter Melissa Etheridge. The star-studded evening will provide a full slate of high profile speakers and global musical talents who represent the best of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Loved by the mainstream for her passionate lyrics and distinctive rocker vocals, Etheridge broke through to megastardom in 1993 after coming out ahead of the release of her album *Yes I Am.* Ever since, she has remained one of America's favorite female singer-songwriters combining her musical talent with outspoken activism. Last October she released *Memphis Rock & Soul* to critical acclaim.

The closing ceremony will also feature a "passing of the torch" to the city that will host the next WorldPride. "We look forward to closing out Pride in celebration and in commemoration of our ingenious history and our invaluable collected experiences as a community," said Chris Frederick.

#### worldpride.org



Archive/MVC Pride



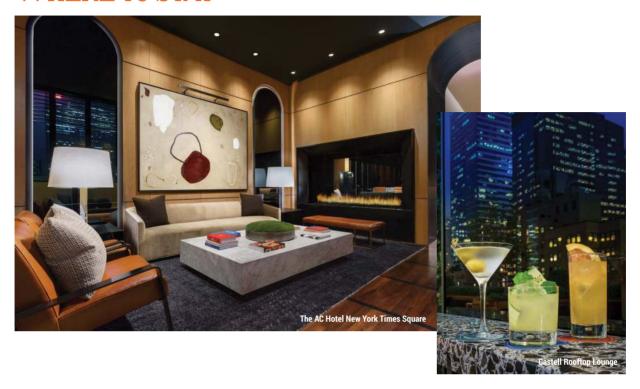
Griffin Lipson (Phide Island); Myriam Santos (Etheridge)





Tiffany Sage (PrideFest); Madison Voelkel (HRC)

### WHERE TO STAY



The AC Hotel New York Times Square is perfectly situated to get you to all your WorldPride activities and to anywhere in the city itself. Located at 260 West 40th St., it's within walking distance of Times Square to the west and Bryant Park to the east. Transportation to anywhere is just a block away at the Port Authority Terminal. The hotel itself is a contemporary glass-fronted tower with chic, spacious rooms in what is essentially an urban oasis. Suites feature minimalist monochrome interiors with all the conveniences and amenities you would expect from a Marriott.

If you book a King guest room with City View you'll be treated to floor-toceiling glass windows that are slightly raked, evoking that classic New York City penthouse feel. Depending on your location, your room might have views over DKNY or the *New York*Times headquarters! You really feel as though Gotham City is at your feet.

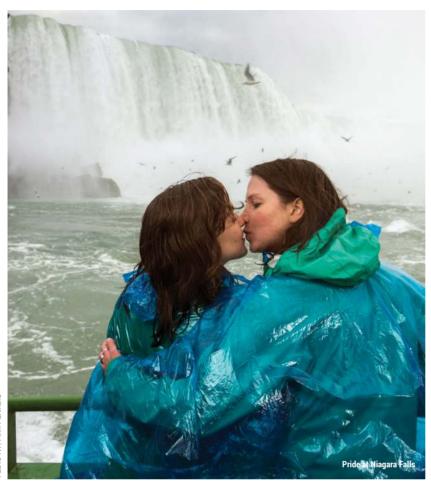
After checking in, I went straight to the rooftop lounge and took in the iconic Manhattan skyline views at Castell Rooftop Lounge, a lovely bar that serves light bites, small share plates, and classic cocktails. Sit inside or grab a table on the terrace. It's a great spot to unwind and plan your Big Apple adventure.

For a great meal without leaving the property, book a table at Boqueria for authentic modern Barcelona-style tapas. Lunch and dinner feature tapas, paella, and seasonal specials, paired with hand-selected wines, cocktails, and Sangría. This is also where the signature AC breakfast—including croissants, charcuterie, fruit, cheeses, egg tarts, and house-made

chia pudding-is served. On the same block as the AC Hotel are other quintessential NYC options, everything from Dean & Deluca to pizza. And to work off those slices, you can hit the state-of-the-art gym below the lobby. Or just hit the pavement. You are within easy walking distance of Broadway, Restaurant Row, and the WorldPride parade route. And, love it or hate it, Times Square is arguably the world's most visited tourist attraction. The following must-see sites are all less than a mile from your door, the Empire State Building, Madison Square Garden, Radio City Music Hall, Rockefeller Center, Central Park, Grand Central Terminal, the High Line, Fifth Avenue shopping, and MOMA-just to name a few!

marriott.com

### PRIDE HEADS UPSTATE



ove NY/Finn Partners

Fifty years ago this summer, a group of individuals at New York City's Stonewall Inn-including lesbians and transgender folks!-stood up to decades of discrimination in one night. The Stonewall Inn and the park right across the street from it have become the country's first national monument dedicated to LGBTQ rights. But New York State has always been a leader in advancing equal rights, with a proud legacy that includes abolition, women's rights, LGBTQ equality, and, most recently, the NYC gender-neutral birth certificates law. While millions of people are expected to visit New York City for this momentous occasion, we recommend you extend your visit and explore New York State and take advantage of the lush summer environment in scenic regions including Long Island, the Hudson Valley, the Catskills, the Adirondaks, 1000 Islands, the Finger Lakes, Niagara and more.

"Sing Out, New York!", May 28–June 2 and June 6–q

The five-day American Music Festival, May 28 to June 2 in the township of Troy, will feature renowned composers and advocates for LGBTQ rights. A regional tour of free outdoor concerts, June 6 to 9, will highlight the Stonewall uprising, World-Pride 2019, and the women's suffrage movement, showcasing New York State's

role in these social justice movements.

Pride on the Beach, June 21–23
Long Island, birthplace of Harvey Milk, will kick off New York's Pride celebrations with Pride on the Beach, a three-day destination weekend of 30+ LGBTQ events, including concerts, parties, and the second annual Pet Pride Parade in collaboration with Animal Planet. A great way to unwind and cool down by the ocean.

Pride on the Vines, June 25

Visitors to Long Island can head straight from the beach to the vineyard for Pride on the Vines. This daylong event in the North Fork's picturesque wine country will include tours, tastings, receptions, and parties. I mean, wine not?

Bishop Gene Robinson, July 2

Bishop Gene Robinson, the Episcopal Church's first openly gay bishop, will lead a discussion about the building of America's LGBTQ community through major events including Stonewall, the AIDS crisis, and marriage equality. The discussion, paired with a reception hosted by Chautauqua's LGBTQ community organization, will be part of a weeklong program examining "Uncommon Ground: Communities Working Toward Solutions."

Pride at the Falls, July 5

Celebrate WorldPride and Stonewall 50 at one of the world's most famous natural wonders: Niagara Falls, America's oldest state park. Pride at the Falls features a free concert by the Buffalo Philharmonic, fireworks, and the Falls lit in rainbow colors.

iloveny.com/WorldPride

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